

STATE OF CONNECTICUT • COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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MAURICE W. BLANCHETTE
First Selectman

JAMES M. PRICHARD
Deputy First Selectman

LAURIE E. BURSTEIN
A. LEO MILLER, JR.
LORI L. SPIELMAN
RONALD F. STOMBERG
JOHN W. TURNER

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
March 1, 2010
Town Hall - Meeting Hall

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Maurice Blanchette, Laurie Burstein, A. Leo Miller, James Prichard, Lori Spielman, Ronald Stomberg and John Turner

OTHERS PRESENT: Nicholas DiCorleto, Finance Officer; Don Davis, Emergency Management Director; Sgt. William Konieczny, Resident State Troopers' Office; Lisa M. Houlihan, Assistant Town Planner; Larry Smith, Hartford Courant; Marcus Hatfield, Journal Inquirer

1. Call to Order:

First Selectman Maurice Blanchette called the meeting of the Board of Selectmen (BOS) to order at 7:33 p.m.

2. Citizens' Forum:

No one came forward.

3. RESOLUTION: State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Grant Contract

Mr. Blanchette explained that the purpose of this motion is to duplicate what was done in August 2009, when Mr. Stupinski was the First Selectman. The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services of the State of Connecticut requested that this motion be updated to reflect that the First Selectman is now Mr. Blanchette.

MOVED (TURNER), SECONDED (PRICHARD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY THOSE PRESENT TO ADOPT THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:

RESOLVED, THAT MAURICE BLANCHETTE, THE FIRST SELECTMAN OF THE TOWN OF ELLINGTON, IS AUTHORIZED TO ENTER INTO AND AMEND CONTRACTUAL INSTRUMENTS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT.

Mr. Miller arrived to the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

4. 2010-2011 BUDGET

Mr. Blanchette asked the BOS to check to make sure they had the latest copy of the proposed budget. He noted that some Department Heads were in attendance and that they all paid close attention to the guidelines issued by Robert Clements, the Chairman of the Board of Finance. Mr. Blanchette noted that, in general, the budget will maintain the services that the residents of Ellington have come to expect from the Town, while not adding much of anything new. The budget summary will be reviewed line by line and he encouraged BOS members to keep in mind the following points: (1) This budget does not include all departments of the Town such as the Board of Education and for historical reasons it also does not include the Library, both fire departments, the Ellington Volunteer Ambulance Corp, Human Services (with the exception of the Senior Center), Parks and Recreation, and miscellaneous boards and commissions. (2) In the current year, employees did not receive pay raises. In this budget, 3.25% contracted increases for unionized employees are included within each department's budget. (3) With the exception of Emergency Services, all cell phones provided to employees for their jobs have been reassigned to account #810, "Town Hall". (4) The Debt Service budget is up overall by approximately \$113,000 because of the addition of some very expensive equipment and to close out the Ellington High School/Center School projects. Mr. Blanchette noted that he is concerned that with the second year of a great financial challenge, this budget will not provide as much infrastructure support as is needed and the Town will fall further behind. He added that with the population increasing at 2% per year for the last 15 years, assuming that student population growth is at least reflective of overall population growth, he expects that infrastructure wear is leading infrastructure maintenance. When the Town recovers from the immediate financial chaos, these challenges should be addressed. Mr. Blanchette concluded that for now, the budget presented should get full attention.

The BOS reviewed the proposed 2010-2011 Budget and made the following comments:

Line 110 – Board of Selectman: (Sub Line 5103 – Part Time) Mr. Miller asked Mr. DiCorleto to explain the first six months accrual and the estimated total actual. Mr. DiCorleto explained that he does not know how many BOS meetings and special meetings will be held for the remainder of this year, and that it is possible that the amount could be fully used up. (Sub Line 5104 – Seasonal): Mr. Miller asked Mr. DiCorleto to explain the disbursement of the entire budget in the first part of the year. Mr. DiCorleto explained that this person was paid a lump sum in January.

Line 131 – Tax Assessor: (Sub Line 5101 Full Time) Mr. Miller asked about the \$6,000 increase in full-time salaries and Mr. DiCorleto explained that this reflects the 3.25% increase explained earlier in the meeting. (Sub Line 6234 Professional Development) Mr. Miller asked for clarification regarding the money in this budget and Mr. DiCorleto explained that this is a required recertification that the Assessor needs to complete to perform the job.

Line 140 – Town Clerk: Mr. Turner asked Mr. DiCorleto about the \$40,910.00 underage overall for 2009-2010. Mr. DiCorleto explained that under Sub Line 6254 – State of Connecticut, some State licenses and permits were historically sold through the Town, but more and more people are now purchasing licenses and permits over the internet. Mr. DiCorleto said that the revenue will also be reduced, also.

Line 150 – Town Counsel: Mr. Miller said he noticed that the \$50,000 (Raymond Lawsuit) was removed from the Town Counsel Expenditures. He asked if there is a sub line for money in the event the Town is sued. Mr. DiCorleto explained that historically, there has not been a separate line item in the budget for this purpose. Mr. Miller stressed that he believes there ought to be a

designated line item for this purpose. Mr. DiCorleto said that the BOS has not wanted to fund a separate account for this purpose. Mr. Miller noted that the account would only be funded in the event it became necessary, as it is now in the Town Attorney's budget.

Line 170 – Town Planner: (Sub Line 6233 – Education and Sub Line 6234 – Professional Development) Mr. Turner asked about the increases in both accounts. Mr. Blanchette stated that last year Education was dropped to zero and there is \$2,000 proposed for this budget. He asked Lisa Houlihan if she could address it. Ms. Houlihan said she was not prepared to address the line items on behalf of the Town Planner, but that she does know that there are continuing education credits required for planning certification. She noted that some employees belong to professional organizations that commonly hold seminars, and without the budget money, they have had to decline in the past. Ms. Houlihan added that she is unaware of any changes to the certification requirements from last year to this year. Mr. Miller expressed concern regarding the increases, and stated that he would like back-up material to justify the requests. Mr. Blanchette explained that the BOS members are free to request additional information from the Department Heads at any time. Mr. Turner noted that although he does support Education and Professional Development, he agrees that there is insufficient documentation to support the request. (Sub Line 6223 – Travel) Mr. Stomberg asked how the Travel budget fits in. Mr. DiCorleto explained that this money is there for times when staff must use their personal vehicles to travel to local locations, when the Town car is not available for use. Mr. Blanchette added that it covers the department for 3,000 miles with a personal car.

Line 350 – Emergency Management: (Sub Line 6250 – Contracted Services) Mr. Turner asked for further explanation regarding installing the phone lines for the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) (\$285) and Broad Band connections for the EOC (\$899). Mr. Davis explained that the phone lines need to be moved and they are backed up with direct lines from AT&T, in the event the computer goes down. The Broad Band has to be upgraded to be capable of running the State's Web EOC program. The present system does not provide the minimum transfer capabilities needed. Mr. Turner requested clarification for why the cost is in both the 2009-2010 budget and the 2010-2011 proposed budget. Mr. Davis said that the project did not get implemented yet, so he put the request in again this year. The money that was allotted in 2009-2010 was used for the purchase of Blackberries. The reason for the purchase of the Blackberries is to keep in close contact with the State and to be able to receive urgent messages and notification of last minute conference calls. (Sub Line 6761 – Technical Equipment) Mr. Turner asked about the money allotted for this account. He asked if the personal hygiene kits prepared last year need to be duplicated again this year. Mr. Davis said that it is necessary to keep 200 kits in each shelter. (Sub Line 6765 – Office Equipment) Mr. Turner asked about the replacement of the printer that is in this year's budget, but again shows in next year's budget. He asked if the Town is buying two, and Mr. Davis said that the goal is to purchase two; one for back-up.

Mr. Turner also stated that he strongly supports the purchase of the Everbridge Emergency Notification System, but because it is involving a number of agencies within the Town, he suggests that it be broken out into its own line item, under Public Safety. Mr. DiCorleto suggests that this item stay in the Emergency Management account, in the event that the State has funding for Emergency Management. He added that because Mr. Davis is the Emergency Management Director for the Town, the money should be in his budget. Mr. Turner noted that he disagrees. Mr. Davis said that it is in his budget because it is the responsibility of his department to warn the Town of any impending disasters. This product is an emergency notification system that will benefit more than one agency, and the EOC Advisory Council will have input on the guidelines for implementation.

Line 410 – General Town Roads: Mr. Miller asked about the increase in salaries. Mr. Blanchette reminded the BOS members that there were some very recent, long-delayed promotions that have taken place this year. (Sub Line 6261 – Crystal Lake Cemeteries) Mr. Turner asked for clarification regarding this charge and Mr. Fetko replied that it is for mowing, which is contracted out.

Line 420 – Equipment Maintenance: Mr. Turner asked if the increase in the cost of diesel fuel represents the cost of diesel rather than any other change in the environment. Mr. Fetko confirmed that it represents the cost of the fuel.

Line 456 – Household Hazardous Waste: Mr. Turner stated that he strongly suggests that this account be funded, due to the importance of the program. He added that this program removes chemicals and hazardous materials from homes, away from children and out of the environment.

Line 480 – Engineer & Inspections: Mr. Blanchette noted that this account is expected to run over by \$15,000 for the present year, and the proposed budget represents an additional \$11,000 increase.

Line 585 – Crystal Lake – Water Monitor: Mr. Turner noted that the 2010-2011 request should be \$25,000 rather than \$32,000. Mr. DiCorleto said that he would make the correction.

Line 795 – Senior Center: (Sub Line 5101) Mr. Miller asked about the increase in the salary budget. Mr. Blanchette noted that a part-time employee is going to be made a full-time employee. (Sub Line 6250) Mr. Miller requested an explanation of the increase in contracted services. Mr. Blanchette advised that the Senior Center is going to be paying rent on part of the building that had been prepaid through a grant for the past 15 years. Mr. Blanchette added that also included is 20% of the cost of the new bus that will be delivered this summer. Through a grant, the State will pay 80% of the cost of the bus.

Line 810 – Town Hall: (Sub Line 6766) Mr. Turner noted that he doesn't believe that the Town Hall Remediation and Boiler Conversion belongs as a line item in this budget.

Line 850 – Pinney House: Ms. Spielman expressed concern about the cost of keeping the Pinney House running, especially during the winter months, since it is a building that cannot be utilized and that the Town does not own. Mr. Prichard added that when the BOS accepted the grant, they were told that there would be no heat in the building. Mrs. Burstein stated that she was under the impression that there were donors that were going to put money toward the building. Mr. DiCorleto noted that this is an estimated budget. Discussion was held regarding the cost and the necessity of the building maintenance. Mr. Blanchette said that he will review the minutes of the meeting that shows the acceptance of the grant to see what the details confirm.

Line 860 – Old Crystal Lake Schoolhouse: (Sub Line 6250) Mr. Miller asked Mr. Fetko to explain the \$4,000 budgeted under contracted services. Mr. Fetko said that last year the budget was \$8,000 and the project wasn't fully funded, so the \$8,000 will come back. This year the building is ready to go out for bid and this covers operating expenses. Mr. Miller asked what the expenses consist of and Mr. Fetko said it is just an average at this point, and could include many aspects of maintaining the building.

Line 950 – Insurance: Mr. Blanchette noted that rates increased for health insurance by 15%. He added that he expects more people to switch to the HSA account. There is a significant increase on the MERF plan, which the Town is contractually required to fund. (Sub Line 5151 Anthem BC/BS) Mr. Miller observed that the cost is more realistic this year than in the past, however, he suggested that the proposed budget is still too high. Mr. DiCorleto noted that the budgeted amount includes \$23,000 for the employee who will now be benefit-eligible due to a change in status to full time. He added that it also allows for the increase in premiums, as well as potential changes in employee status, and he did not recommend reducing this account. Mrs. Burstein asked how often competitive quotes are requested. Mr. DiCorleto said that this process takes place every year. Mr. DiCorleto stated that it is important to have contingencies built into this account, so any changes don't decimate another department's budget. Mr. Miller said that this line item is overfunded. Mrs. Burstein noted that she agrees with Mr. Miller.

Line 1025 – Ad Hoc Graduation Committee: Mr. Turner noted that this is a great program, but doubling the amount allotted last year is too much. Mrs. Burstein said that the program does make a difference to the students. Mr. Prichard added that the students do get donations from area businesses for this event. Mrs. Burstein noted that donations were down last year.

Line 1031 – Adhoc Patriotic Committee: (Sub Line 5103) Mr. Turner asked what this money was set aside for. Mr. DiCorleto said that he put it in to cover any administrative costs the new committee may have, and after they have one year of experience, the account can be more accurately predicted.

MOVED (TURNER), AND SECONDED (PRICHARD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO REDUCE LINE 1025 – ADHOC GRADUATION COMMITTEE FROM \$5,000 TO \$3,000.

MOVED (MILLER), SECONDED (BURSTEIN) AND FAILED [AYE: MILLER/BURSTEIN; NAY: SPIELMAN/TURNER/STOMBERG/PRICHARD] WITH RESPECT TO LINE 0170 TOWN PLANNER, SUB LINE 6234 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THAT THE BOARD OF FINANCE BE ADVISED THAT THIS MAY WELL BE A MERITORIOUS AMOUNT, BUT THE BOARD OF FINANCE NEEDS TO REQUEST BACKUP FROM THE TOWN PLANNER BECAUSE THE BOS DOESN'T HAVE ADEQUATE BACKUP INFORMATION TO SUBSTANTIATE THIS REQUEST.

Mr. Miller noted that he doesn't like the idea of summarily reducing the account without giving the Town Planner the opportunity to offer adequate backup information. Mrs. Burstein noted that she agrees with Mr. Miller.

MOVED (TURNER), SECONDED (STOMBERG) AND PASSED [AYE: SPIELMAN/TURNER/STOMBERG/ PRICHARD; NAY: MILLER/BURSTEIN] TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF LINE 0170 TOWN PLANNER, SUB LINE 6234 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BY \$2,000.

MOVED (SPIELMAN), SECONDED (PRICHARD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO REDUCE LINE 850 – PINNEY HOUSE FROM \$16,000 TO \$8,000.

Mr. Miller stressed that the Employee Insurance account is overfunded and that the past three years' history confirms that the account is routinely overfunded. Mr. Turner noted that events can occur and keeping that in mind, the cut proposed by Mr. Miller is too large. Mr. Stomberg noted that if the funds are not expended, they stay in the account, so it is not money lost, but dollars put away to be cautious. Mr. Miller responded that you could make that case for many accounts.

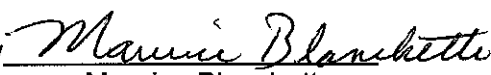
MOVED (MILLER), SECONDED (BURSTEIN) AND FAILED [AYE: MILLER/BURSTEIN/SPIELMAN; NAY: TURNER/STOMBERG/PRICHARD/BLANCHETTE], THAT SUB LINE 5151 OF LINE 950 BE REDUCED FROM \$1,111,469 TO \$1,050,000.

Mr. Miller stated that the employee insurance account is too high.

MOVED (TURNER), SECONDED (PRICHARD) AND PASSED [AYE: BURSTEIN/SPIELMAN TURNER/STOMBERG/PRICHARD; NAY: MILLER] TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF FINANCE THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN APPROVED TOWN BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010-2011, A GRAND TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$13,213,131. (BUDGET TABLE ATTACHED)

5. Adjournment:

MOVED (SPIELMAN), SECONDED (PRICHARD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN AT 10:20 P.M.

Submitted by  Approved by 
LouAnn Cannella Maurice Blanchette

BUDSEL 10-11										TOWN OF ELLINGTON										BUDGET EXPENDITURE REQUEST									
										FISCAL YEAR 2010-11																			
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